



Daniel Morgan and the Riflemen

Hello, my name is Jason Collins and I am an interpreter here at Valley Forge National Park. I want to speak a few moments talking about an unsung hero of the American Revolution. This man played a role in just about every major campaign in the American Revolution, but he does not get the credit that he deserves. This man is General Daniel Morgan.

Morgan was the leader of the Continental Army Riflemen during the American Revolution. Morgan joined the Continental Army almost from the outset of the war. He joined in 1775 along with his company of 96 riflemen from Virginia. He joined Benedict Arnold in the invasion of Canada and after Arnold was wounded he actually took command of the American forces and was eventually made a prisoner by the British.

After his release from prison, he rejoined the Continental Army under General Washington. Not long after he rejoined the army in early 1777, he was dispatched to join the northern army under General Horatio Gates. Gates was combating British incursions from Canada. He was being pushed back and Washington knew that if he sent Morgan's riflemen that it would help turn the tide of the campaign to favor the Americans. However, he also knew that if he sent these riflemen north that it would weaken his own forces, but he still parted with them.

These riflemen along with Benedict Arnold were enough to turn the tide of the war at Saratoga where Morgan and his riflemen distinguished themselves.

The most important part of the battle was when British General Simon Fraser was rallying his men for another charge against the Americans when Morgan was given orders by Benedict Arnold to take Fraser out. Morgan tells on of his riflemen to take Fraser out which he did. This helps to turn the tide of the battle at Saratoga.

After the battles at Saratoga, Morgan rejoins Washington in time for the winter here at Valley Forge. Morgan was charged with patrolling the west side of the Schuylkill River. He was charged with stopping farmers from selling their goods to the British in Philadelphia.

He eventually asked, and was granted a leave from the army because he was combating rheumatism and could not even sit on top of his horse. He eventually arrives back at Valley Forge in time for watching over the camp during the French Alliance Celebration on May 6, 1778.

After Valley Forge, he eventually returns home for a period of two years and will eventually rejoin the Continental Army serving in the southern theater. Morgan's crowning achievement was the overwhelming American victory at Cowpens on January 17, 1781. Morgan's men were able to destroy British forces under Colonel Banastre Tarleton.

After this battle, Morgan eventually retires from the service and goes back to his farm in Virginia. So, as you can see, Daniel Morgan plays a very important part in the overall fighting in the American Revolution.